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February 9, 1996

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ADULT EDUCATION FOCUS OF UPCOMING CONFERENCE

CHARLESTON -- The ever increasing number of adult students enrolling in today's universities has become a prominent issue in the education world and will be the topic of discussion at the Illinois CAEL (Council for Adult Experiential Learning) Conference Feb. 21 at Jumer's Castle Lodge in Urbana.

The conference, offered by EIU's Office of Conferences and Non-Credit Programs, precedes the ICCHE (Illinois Council on Continuing Higher Education) meeting Feb. 22 and 23.

Two schedules of lectures, one for administrators and another for faculty and other instructors, are being offered. Administrative sessions will deal with prior learning assessment programs and the use of consortiums. The conference's faculty and instructor presentations, meanwhile, will cover the validity of prior learning assessment and maintaining academic standards.

William Hine, dean of Eastern's School of Adult and Continuing Education, said the surge of adult students into universities is a trend that slowly has escalated during the past 30 years.

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"The trend began in the 1970s when it was one adult to every three traditional students," said Hine, who will be speaking at the conference. "Now it is almost one adult to every traditional student."

Hine predicted adult students will make up almost 60 percent of university enrollment by the year 2000.

Although the trend has spanned over three very different decades, the reasons people have for returning to college have remained the same. Hine said the growth of technology, women seeking employment, men and women seeking second careers and the economic necessity for two jobs in most families has led to the phenomenon.

Despite the sometimes large age difference between traditional students (18 to 21 years old) and adult students, most instructors have adapted to teaching adult students.

"We have found that once faculty work with adults, they enjoy it," Hine said. "It is different in that they have to change their teaching styles. They have to move away from lecturing and using more collaborative teaching formats."

"This changes the role of the professor from one who transmits information to one who facilitates gathering information," he said. "Adult students are more involved in becoming self-directed learners."

Hine added adult students tend to be better and more motivated to learn because of their life experiences. "However, adult students want more practical

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ADULT EDUCATION

1information that they can put to use immediately," he said.

In addition to Hine, Kaye Woodward, director of Eastern's Board of Governors program, also is presenting several sessions at the conference.

Individuals interested in attending the conference should call Eastern's School of Adult and Continuing Education at (217) 581-5116. Registration is \$38 per person and will include the sessions, a luncheon and coffee break. A reduced rate of \$100 is available for parties of three.